



UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
AND
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION



FLEET PLAN

October 2014



Washington, D.C.





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NOAA Ships BELL M. SHIMADA (left) and PISCES underway in the Gulf of Mexico.

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On the Cover: Coast Guard Seaman Craig Senczyszyn secures a NOAA buoy to the deck of USCG Cutter ALDER in western Lake Superior. ALDER is part of Operation Fall Retrieve, which switches vital buoys in the Great Lakes with more durable ice buoys before the winter freezes the Lakes.

Opposite Page: NOAA Ship OSCAR DYSON at anchor off the coast of Alaska.



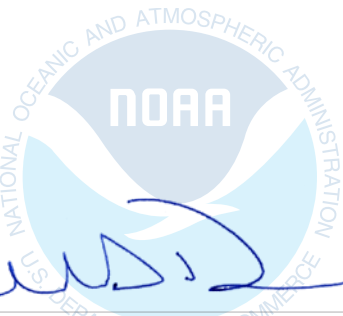

**Washington, DC
October 8, 2014**

Since the birth of our Nation the United States Coast Guard (USCG) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) have successfully and frequently supported each other's missions through cooperative efforts and joint operations. We do this to promote our Nation's economy, sustain our natural resources, and save lives from the perils of the sea. Our partnership must grow to keep pace with scarce federal resources and growing demands placed upon the maritime commons.

The USCG and NOAA best serve the Nation when we deliberately prepare and operate our fleets to support each other. This plan sets the course to achieve this goal. It provides direction and guidance for our Services to achieve commonality and interoperability. It strengthens the Nation's sea power by supporting the projection of soft power through maritime governance and sovereign presence. It also achieves strategic priorities promulgated by the United States Coast Guard and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Cooperative Maritime Strategy.



VADM Charles D. Michel, USCG
Deputy Commandant
for Operations



VADM Michael S. Devany, NOAA
Deputy Under Secretary
for Operations



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The USCG and NOAA share a legacy of collaboration stretching back to the beginning of our Nation. Over 207 years of mutual interests and intersecting missions have given rise to productive partnerships in the maritime and atmospheric domains. Common throughout these partnerships is reliance upon people and capital assets – uniformed service members and civilian personnel, ships, boats, aircraft, satellites, and autonomous and remotely piloted vehicles. These resources are employed to support our Nation’s economic welfare and sustain our natural resources. They also form the basis of, and contribute to, the United States’ ability to project soft sea power.

As demand increases on the oceans, Great Lakes, rivers, and coasts to provide transportation, energy, food, and recreation, the challenges faced by the USCG and NOAA to execute their missions will also increase. Scarce fiscal resources require Federal entities to find new and novel partnerships, and pursue cooperative endeavors where missions align across organizational boundaries. These cooperative relationships will gain efficiencies and allow USCG and NOAA to maintain mission excellence. This plan presents a framework to guide cooperation in the operation and maintenance of marine and aviation platforms. It provides the following focus areas for increased collaboration:

- **People:** Explore personnel exchanges for training, exercises, and professional or program development via temporary or permanent marine, aviation, or shore support assignments.
- **Maintenance, Logistics, and Facilities:** Examine commonality of ship and aircraft parts, warehousing nodes, and opportunities to coordinate maintenance and readiness sustainment work. Coordinate in the planning, design, construction and tenancy of home port and airport facilities to maximize utilization of existing and planned infrastructure.
- **Commonality:** Where feasible, leverage buying power for common systems across assets.
- **Joint Operations:** Leverage and expand capacity through joint operations and information sharing between aligned programs.
- **Research, Development, Test and Evaluation:** Collaborate in research, development, test and evaluation activities. Transition research and development to operations and maintain strategic advantage.
- **Coordinating Mechanisms:** Engage leadership of each organization in strategic planning fora to share relevant challenges and opportunities, and set the course toward enhancing mutually beneficial cooperation. Promote regional coordination and operational leadership meetings.



SEA POWER CONTINUUM



NOAA technicians and crewmembers from the USCG Cutter SPAR service a NOAA buoy in the Bering Sea.

The United States projects sea power through a National fleet of marine and aviation assets. Sea power is a continuum. It is comprised of commissioned ships capable of projecting hard and soft power throughout the world. The United States Navy (USN), USCG, and NOAA comprise the full spectrum of national sea power. The USN contributes hard power through ships that provide war fighting capability. The USCG operates in the realm between hard and soft power, operating as a specialized service in the Navy in times of war, supporting defense operations, and providing deterrence and maritime governance functions. NOAA's commissioned ships complete the continuum, projecting soft power through sovereign presence while collecting environmental intelligence around the world. Partnerships between all three services, as well partnerships between NOAA and USN in scientific and operational endeavors strengthen national sea power. This plan strengthens the projection of soft sea power by exploiting common interests, resulting in a stronger and more capable fleet.



FLEET COORDINATION

Coordination between the USCG and NOAA fleets focusing on people; maintenance, logistics, and engineering; commonality; joint operations; research, development, test and evaluation; and strategic and operational coordinating mechanisms will benefit the Nation.

People

In August 2012, NOAA's officer accession program began the process of creating a Joint Officer Training Center at the USCG's Officer Candidate School. The resultant joint service officer training program is arguably the most powerful enabler of fleet coordination. The professional relationships, service mission understanding, and trust developed between USCG and NOAA Officer Candidates through the OCS curriculum has already begun to yield closer ties and unity of effort as the next generations of USCG and NOAA leadership embark upon their careers. Building upon the joint service officer training program concept, we will examine our training portfolios with an eye toward increasing the proficiency of our personnel by providing interagency training and developmental opportunities.



Rear Adm. Sandra Stosz, Superintendent of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, and then Rear Adm. Michael Devany, Director of the NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps, signing the Interagency Agreement that created the Joint Service Officer Training Center at the Leadership Development Center on May 31, 2013.

USCG and NOAA have a long history of exchanging personnel for specific missions and for professional development with positive results. Opportunistic, operational-level temporary duty assignments have created tremendous value for our programs and for the professional development and expertise of our workforce. These opportunities are ripe for expansion to include long term details and permanent change of station assignments to activities and units afloat, ashore, or in the air.

Maintenance, Logistics and Facilities

The NOAA fleet and modern USCG buoy tenders and ice breakers share commonalities in command, control, and communication, as well as in power generation, machinery automation, and other primary ship systems. Ships require shore support facilities and aircraft require ground-based support to conduct preventive and corrective maintenance. These assets also require home port and airport facilities from which to operate. Commonalities in marine and aviation platforms and in the location and maintenance of home ports and airports are fertile ground to find efficiencies and leverage expertise. USCG and NOAA will investigate joint use, development and/or expansion, of ship home port and airport facilities. We will leverage best practices in supply chain management and maintenance and repair services.

Commonality

Enhanced interoperability between fleets is a desired outcome of collaboration as well as a focus area to advance fleet plan goals. We will explore common procedures and research standardized C4IT (Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Information Technology) and navigation systems aboard our platforms to enhance interoperability. Commonality of systems will support our ability to seamlessly exchange personnel when needed, collaborate on joint operations, and leverage each other's platforms for sensor deployment and data acquisition.



NOAA Ship OKEANOS EXPLORER, NOAA Survey Vessel BAY HYDROGRAPHER II and a CG Response Boat Medium in Baltimore Harbor.

Joint Operations

Opportunistic and low cost projects will form the majority of joint operations over the short term. Working together, the Coast Guard and NOAA are optimally positioned to address complementary emerging issues such as the Oceania Maritime Security Initiative; climate buoy array maintenance; fisheries enforcement and fisheries resource surveys; and bathymetric surveys/waterways management missions.

Achieving long term and substantial success in joint operations requires NOAA to invest resources and provide some multi-mission capabilities in the existing fleet, and to include common capabilities in ship requirements for the future. Facilities and equipment to handle classified information, secure communications, and re-establishment of armories and small arms training are critical and fundamental to supporting robust joint operations capability.

Research, Development, Test and Evaluation (RDT&E)

New technologies serve to provide strategic advantage and advance the missions of the USCG and NOAA. Whether applied to the interdiction of dangerous drugs at sea or to the collection of environmental intelligence in the Arctic to prepare for oil spills, RDT&E collaboration has the potential to reap substantial benefits for each organization.

NOAA's research and development activities have a track record of producing novel solutions to complex ocean and atmosphere monitoring requirements. Creative solutions and unique approaches are integral to the pursuit of environmental intelligence. The discoveries made and the knowledge gained from basic research can have profound impact on the efficacy of at-sea missions.



NOAA Corps Ens. Kevin Doremus launching the first Puma unmanned aviation system flight from the deck of the USCG Cutter HEALY during Operation Arctic Shield in 2013.

Additionally, the employment of autonomous and remotely piloted systems, the miniaturization and development of new sensors, and the application of NOAA's remote sensing tools have, and are poised to continue to enhance USCG missions. Similarly, the availability of each other's assets as platforms of opportunity to observe and collect data or deploy instruments can and has served as force multipliers for both organizations.



NOAA Research Vessel LAURENTIAN moored alongside USCG Cutters MACKINAW and MOBILE BAY in Grand Haven, Michigan.

Strategic and Operational Coordination Mechanisms

Awareness of each other's priorities and challenges is required to identify opportunities for mutually beneficial collaboration. Processes and forums to manage operations and set priorities exist within USCG and NOAA. The nature of this cooperative plan encompasses a wide array of operations – human resources, marine and aviation operations, engineering, information technology, training, and research and development. Interagency engagement must be coordinated and focused across multiple areas of responsibility and orchestrated at senior levels of leadership to maintain strategic direction. Commanders, Office Directors, and Program Managers must be engaged to provide vision and direct their staff and resources to pursue meaningful collaboration and achieve success.

Recognizing the tremendous value of partnerships generated from disciplined initiative at the operational level, NOAA and USCG operational commanders are encouraged to engage with their interagency partners through participation in Command Conferences, Aviation Safety Conferences, Cutter Roundups, and other events where organizational accomplishments, challenges, and lessons learned are shared.



CONCLUSION

Looking forward, USCG and NOAA will face future challenges to continue providing services that support our Nation's economic success while safeguarding our natural resources. Thoughtful and deliberate action to find and act upon opportunities and expand upon our legacy of cooperation will assist us in meeting future challenges and demand for services while we enhance our Nation's ability to project soft sea power in an increasingly complex global landscape.



Scientists from the NOAA Ship OSCAR DYSON transit back after conducting research in the Arctic Circle.

